

REPORT

ON THE

TERRITORY OF OREGON,

BY A COMMITTEE,

APPOINTED AT A MEETING OF THE CITIZENS OF COLUMBUS, TO COLLECT INFORMATION IN RELATION THERETO.

COLUMBUS, O.

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OREGON TERRITORY.

REPORT

Of Mr. MEDARY, from the committee (consisting of SAMUEL MEDARY, WILLIAM B. HUBBARD, J. W. MILLIGAN, N. B. KELLEY, JOSEPH LEIBY, M. J. GILBERT and P. H. OLMSTED,) appointed at a meeting of the citizens of Columbus, to collect information in relation to the territory of Oregon.

YOUR committee, appointed at a previous meeting, having performed the duties of their appointment, now ask leave to report:

That the subject is one of such magnitude to the people of the United States, in every aspect in which it can be presented, that your committee feel that they have but partially performed the work assigned them.

The public mind has been so long neglectful of the vast territory beyond the Rocky Mountains—the out-let to the great ocean on our western border, which, at no very distant day, is to carry upon its majestic bosom the most extensive and important commerce of the world—that it will require some effort to arouse it from its accustomed lethargy. But that effort is now in progress, and from all quarters do we hear the din and bustle of inquiry—and as action begets action, and knowledge creates a taste for further information, we need not apprehend a calm until this long neglected portion of our rich possessions is fully subject to the jurisdiction and control of the American people. The far-seeing statesman and philosopher will look into the future, and keep pace with the mighty sweep of civilization in its onward course towards the setting sun; and if your committee can, therefore, aid, in any degree, in arousing the public mind to a true sense of the incalculable importance of this new and comparatively unexplored country, they will feel amply compensated for their labor.

Every President, we believe, from Mr. Jefferson, under whose patronage the expedition of Lewis and Clark was got up, and so successfully carried through, to the present Chief Magistrate, inclusive, has called the attention of Congress to this extensive region of country, its magnitude, resources, and unsettled condition. Yet, until the present time, Congress has not taken the subject into very serious consideration, though report after report, for the last twenty years, has been made to one or the other branch of the National Legislature.

The first report, on "the expediency of occupying the Columbia river," was made to the House of Representatives in Congress, January 25, 1821, by Gov. Floyd, of Virginia; the second, by Mr. Baylies, of Massachusetts, on the subject of establishing a military post at the mouth of the Columbia river, January 16, 1826, and a supplementary report May 15, of the same year. The third report was made to the Senate June 6, 1838, by Dr. Linn, of Missouri.—The fourth report was made to the House by Mr. Cushing, of Massachusetts, January 4, 1839. The fifth report was made to the House by Mr. Pendleton, of Ohio, May 27, 1842. The sixth report was made to the House by Mr. Reynolds, of Illinois, February 9, 1843.

These reports successively urge, with great force and clearness, the necessity of occupying this territory by the United States, and prove, with absolute certainty,

that the title is in the United States alone, by discovery and by treaty.

The time has now arrived when the question can no longer be postponed. Citizens of the United States have taken up their abode in the very heart of this future great empire, and demand from their Government protection and recognition of citizenship.

Inhabitants owing allegiance to a foreign crown, have taken advantage of the liberality of our government in a treaty of reciprocal commerce, and are seizing upon the most valuable part of the domain, and monopolizing the trade, commerce, and agriculture of the country. Delay, therefore, magnifies the difficulties, and endangers the ultimate peace of the country. In view of this, the Senate has passed a bill at the present session, introduced by Dr. Linn, of Missouri, to establish a chain of military posts from the Missouri or Upper Arkansas river across the Rocky Mountains to the mouth of the Columbia river, on the Pacific Ocean, and to extend the protecting arm of the law over the whole region of country, by placing it under the territorial government of Iowa, until a new territory is organized beyond it in the great west. We have not the bill as it finally passed the Senate of the United States, but learn that it grants liberal donations of land to settlers, as follows:

A man with a family shall be entitled to 640 acres of land for himself, 160 acres for his wife, and 160 acres for each child under 18 years of age, and 160 for each child for five years after his arrival; and each child over 18 years of age, on his or her arrival, will be entitled to 640 acres.

From such liberal grants of land, some families we might name in Ohio, could sweep over territory enough to rival the possessions of the temporal lord of some European principality. These grants of land show the great importance the advocates of the bill in Congress attach to a speedy and permanent occupancy of this territory; but do not prove its barrenness or want of natural inducements to settlers. When Mr. Jefferson was about purchasing Louisiana, so great was the clamor and opposition, and the declarations that it was a worthless wilderness that would not be inhabited within a hundred years, that he recommended donations of land to the first 30,000 settlers as an inducement to emigrate. In forty years we find that country teeming with an enterprising, prosperous, and free people, and a commerce that outstrips even the imagination itself.

"Look at the Mississippi valley now,"

says Mr. Reynolds, of Illinois, in his recent report to the House of Representatives, in Congress, "and see its immense population, its highly cultivated fields, its large cities, and growing towns, and the hundreds of majestic steamboats that plough the waters of her majestic rivers. And may we not anticipate, from a wise system of legislation, something like this from our Oregon Territory? When we consider the natural advantages and resources of that country, within itself; the rich furs of the northwest; the vast trade of the islands of the Pacific; the tropical productions of the northern coast of Mexico, and Central America; the pearls and gold of Panama and Choco; the inexhaustible mineral and other productions of Peru, on the western coast of South America; the immense trade of the East Indies, so valuable to every commercial nation; the whale fisheries, which are the nurseries of seamen; the prospect of the opening of the ports of China to the commerce of the world, as they now are to Great Britain—when we consider these immensely valuable interests, and how easy our enterprising republican people in Oregon could outstrip all other competitors, in availing themselves of those interests, if they could not practically monopolize them, may we not reasonably expect that, under the benign auspices of such legislation as Congress can adopt, the valley of Oregon will exhibit an improvement in population, agriculture, commerce, navigation, wealth, and political importance, such as has been witnessed in our day in the valley of the Mississippi?"

Boundaries, and extent of the Oregon Territory.

The country designated as the Oregon Territory, is bounded on the south by the Mexican possessions, or Upper California, at the 42d deg. of north latitude; on the west, by the Pacific Ocean; on the north, by the Russian settlements, at 54 deg. 40 min. north latitude; and on the east by the highest points of the Rocky Mountains, which divide the waters which flow west, into the Pacific, through the mouth of the Columbia river, and those which fall into the Atlantic, or Gulf of Mexico, through the Mississippi.

This Territory is estimated, by geographers, to contain 350,000 square miles, an estimate supposed to be far below the real quantity. But, supposing this to be correct, we may form some idea of its importance and extent by comparison. The whole number of square miles within the organized limits of the twenty-six United

States, is about 938,035. Thus it will be seen, that the Oregon Territory is more than one third as large as the twenty-six States of this Union, or, embracing an extent of country equal to Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, R. Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, or equal to the thirteen original States. From south to north, it is about 1,000 miles, and from west to east, from 600 to 800 miles.

The above computation is founded on the authority of geographers, as generally given; but one of your committee, who has given this subject some attention, computes, from the boundaries laid down above, the area of square miles at 484,426, equal to one half of all the territory within the limits of the twenty-six States of this Union! Such is the magnitude of the country lying beyond the great chain of snow capped mountains, which divide the waters of the Atlantic from those of the Pacific.

Face of the Country.

The face of the country is interspersed with hill and valley, mountain and prairie. From the Pacific, for 100 to 150 miles into the interior, the country is level or rolling, and a great portion of it fit for the plough, in a state of nature. It is then interrupted by a chain of hills, or mountains, running from south to north, supposed to be a continuation of the mountains of California.—East of this range of mountains, the country is more broken, and probably less subject to tillage. Mr. Greenhow, in his compilation, presented to the Senate of the U. States, February 6, 1840, by Dr. Linn, divides the county into “three great divisions.” He says that “The territory drained by the Columbia, presents a constant succession of mountain ridges and valleys, or plains of small extent. The principal ridges are two in number, besides the Rocky Mountains, running nearly parallel to each other, and to the coasts; and the country is thus divided into three great regions, which differ materially in climate, soil and productive powers. The *first region*, or *low country*, is that between the coast and the chain of mountains nearest the sea; the *second region* is between the mountains nearest the sea, and the middle ridge, called the Blue Mountains: and the *third region*, or *high country*, is between the Blue mountains and the Rocky Mountains. All these divisions are crossed by the Columbia, the main stream of which is formed in the middle region, by the union of several branches flowing from the Rocky Moun-

tains, and receiving in their course, supplies from innumerable small tributaries, draining the intermediate countries.

“The traveler going west, from the summit of this range, sees the high points of the California Mountains, about one hundred and sixty miles distant, some of which rise more than 1,600 feet from the level of the Pacific. All other views of North America sink to littleness in comparison with this.”

The great California Desert extends a considerable distance into the southeast portion of the Oregon Territory, reaching to the base of the Rocky Mountains, and extending partly along the waters of Lewis, or Snake River, the south branch of the Oregon. The descriptions we have of the territory, are principally confined to that portion lying south of the Oregon, or Columbia river. Some portions of this are deficient in timber, but the northern division is evidently better supplied, as to quantity, if not in quality, and more broken and mountainous upon its surface, though not less productive in the cultivation of grain.

Your committee are inclined to the opinion that much of the best portion of the Territory lies north of the Columbia. That large tract of valley, plain and mountain, lying between the junction of the Columbia, from the northeast, and the Snake, or Lewis River, from the southeast, and extending to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, contains a vast deal of most excellent grazing and farming territory, stretching out, occasionally, in plains and gentle hills, as large as one of the smallest states of this Union. Such, especially, is the country south of Colville and Okanogan.

The coast, northward from the Columbia River, is faced by numerous islands, the principle of which, called Quadra, or Vancouver, is about 150 miles long, and from 20 to 30 broad.

The Oregon is a country of magnificent heights and distances; of bold and novel scenery. The broad green valley, and out stretched prairie, covered with a thousand variety of flowers; the sunburnt, sandy desert, destitute of living thing, and the mountain peak peering to the very heavens above, capped with eternal snow, meet the eye in continued change and variety.—While the proud pine, stretching 300 feet above the earth, as in defiance of the mountain heights, covering in deep thick shade beneath, the rich valley and precipitous water fall, adds new wonders to the astounding scene.

Washington Irving thus describes a view from the high summit of the Rocky Moun-

tains, as the traveller was proceeding west:

"Here a scene burst upon the view of captain Bonneville that for a time astonished and overwhelmed him with its immensity. He stood, in fact, upon that dividing ridge which Indians regard as the crest of the world, and on each side of which the landscape declines to the two cardinal oceans of the world. Whichever way he turned his eye, he was confused by the vastness and variety of objects. Beneath him, the Rocky mountains seemed to open all their secret recesses; deep, solemn valleys, treasured lakes, dreary passes, rugged defiles, and foaming torrents; while, *beyond* their savage precincts, the eye was lost in an almost immeasurable landscape, stretching, on every side, into dim and hazy distance, like the expanse of a summer sea. Whichever way he looked, he beheld vast plains, glimmering with reflected sunshine; mighty streams, wandering on their shining course toward either ocean; and snowy mountains, chain beyond chain, and peak beyond peak, they melted like clouds into the horizon. For a time the Indian fable seemed to be realized. He had obtained that height from which the Blackfoot warrior, after death, catches a view of the land of souls, and beholds the happy hunting grounds spread out below him, brightening with the abodes of free and generous spirits."

Rivers.

"The leading geographical feature in this Territory, is the river Columbia, or Oregon," says the Encyclopedia of Geography. "It rises amid the rugged steep slopes of the Rocky Mountains, in latitude exceeding 50°, and takes a southwest course to the junction of Lewis, or Snake River, from the southeast, from which point, it pursues a pretty direct course to the sea. The principal tributaries of the northern branch are Clarke's River, which has a course of about 600 miles from the mountains, and Okanagan, which comes in from the west. Lewis River, also, called Saptin, (more commonly Snake,) may be considered as the southern branch; it has a rapid, broken course of about 1,000 miles, and at its confluence with the Columbia, is 600 yards wide. The latter river, (the Columbia,) is here, at the distance of 400 miles from the sea, 1,000 yards wide, and is much broken by rapids, both above and below.—About 150 miles below, are the Great Falls, where the river has a descent of 58 feet, and 90 miles lower down, it breaks through the coast chain of mountains; (the California,) at this point, its channel is compressed into a narrow gorge, only 150 yards wide, and its waters are hurried with great violence

over its rocky bed. At the foot of these rapids, 170 miles from the sea, it meets the tide, and thence, to the ocean, its width is generally from two to five miles, and rarely less than one."

The Columbia is somewhat obstructed by sand bars, but is navigable 90 miles from its mouth for vessels of 300 tons. The Wallamette or Willamet, formerly Multnomah, is an important tributary of this river. It rises in about 43 degrees, and, running north one hundred and fifty miles, unites with the Columbia about 90 miles from the sea, nearly opposite Fort Vancouver. Mr. Wyeth, in his memoir, says, that the Wallamette "is navigable for vessels of 12 feet draught, about 20 miles from its mouth; it then becomes shoaler and more rapid; but vessels drawing ten feet might ascend within two miles of the falls, or about 25 miles from its mouth. The falls of this river are perpendicular, and about 22 feet; above them steamboats might ply about 50 miles, but beside them nothing but canoes could be used."

Frazer's river, navigable some distance from its mouth, is about 800 miles in length, and runs into Fuca's Strait, which separates Quadra and Vancouver's Island from the mainland north of the Columbia river.

Umqua river is about the size of the Wallamette, navigable, and enters the Pacific about 200 miles below the mouth of the Columbia.

There are several other streams, not perhaps of less note than some already noticed. They appear, however, to be less known. The rivers of Oregon seem much obstructed by sand bars, shoals, and rapids.

The rapid and rocky channels of the rivers that flow into the Columbia, have been the cause of great disappointments to the first expeditions to that country, and are unlike those on this side the Rocky Mountains. Lewis and Clark, on their arrival at the Kooskooskee, in 1805, and Mr. Hunt, in attempting to navigate the Snake or Lewis river, in 1811, in an expedition to the Astoria settlement, at the mouth of the Columbia, met with serious accidents, and the attempts had to be abandoned. Water power, for manufactories, is unequalled and inexhaustible.

The Peacock, one of the vessels connected with the exploring expedition, was wrecked at the mouth of the Columbia river, in an attempt to cross the sand bar during a storm. Yet navigation on this river is regular, and vessels are continually passing and repassing. When pilots become experienced, navigation will become safer and more extensive.

Climate, Soil, Products, Commerce of the Territory, Miscellaneous, &c.

We now come to a still more important and interesting branch of our subject.

All the accounts that we have seen and examined, represent the climate as remarkably mild, salubrious, and uniform in temperature, in the lower sections of the Territory—cattle requiring no shelter in winter, nor any food, except what they gather in the open fields and prairies. The heat in summer is seldom oppressive, so refreshing and cooling are the winds that sweep over the plains and snow capped mountains, or are wafted from the mild bosom of the Pacific. Snow and ice are unfrequent visitors, and the fig and the vine, at the British settlement, at Vancouver, have been known to stand in the open grounds all winter, uninjured by frost. Rains continue during the winter months; but, from April until October, it has been known not to rain at all, the heavy dews at night supplying the wants of vegetation. The fatal maladies of the fervid south, or of the frigid north, on this side the Rocky Mountains, have seldom, if ever, been known in that region. Along the lowest banks of some of the streams, the fever and ague, and some other diseases, occur, and sometimes have been very fatal among the Indians; but on the uplands, the inhabitants sleep in the open air, during the summer months, with perfect impunity. It is said, that even the fever and ague was unknown among the Indians until recently. It is attributed, by some, to the cultivation of the soil. As you leave the ocean, and approach the mountains, the climate and soil, as well as the products, change their features. General descriptions, therefore, apply, more particularly, to the central regions, or those approaching the Pacific.

The committee will, however, permit those who have traversed the country to speak for themselves. They first introduce a citizen of Oregon, who writes from a point that we were not apprised was occupied by white settlers. Mr. Wilkins has united himself, we learn, with the Methodist missionary connection in that region, as a member of the church:

ZANESVILLE, Feb. 20, 1843.

S. MEDARY, Esq.,

Sir: In obedience to the promise I made you a few days ago, I annex hereto some extracts from a letter written by CALES WILKINS, (brother of Anthony Wilkins, Esq., of this county, who has kindly permitted me to make them,) dated

"COLUMBIA RIVER, OREGON TER., }
"March 30, 1843. }

"I have settled fifty miles from the great Pacific Ocean, eight miles from the Columbia river, in a beautiful country, and commenced farming. Our land produces from forty to sixty bushels of wheat to the acre, and that will weigh from seventy to eighty pounds per bushel. And I find this way of living much better than the life which I lived for the last nine years, ranging the wilds of the Rocky Mountains, where we had to brave every danger.—I came to this place with my wife and two children, and about forty mountaineers; and we have settled ourselves, and have got plenty around us to eat and to wear, and our produce bears a good price. Wheat from 60 cts. to \$1 25 per bushel—Pork \$10 per hundred weight—beef from \$6 to \$8 per hundred weight—flour \$5 per hundred weight; and we can sell as much at that price as we can raise. Ships come in every week from the East India Islands, from the Russian settlements, on the North-west coast, and from California, and all trade with us."

Further extracts might be made, but the letter is a kind of a family letter, and much of it is occupied in that way. Mr. W. says the country is rapidly settling with Americans and French. The mode which Mr. W. gives to his friends of directing him a letter, may aid some individual in getting a letter to that country, and hence, I give it: He says, enclose your letter in an envelope—on the envelope direct to Hiram C. Meek, Westport, Jackson county, Missouri; and direct the letter to Joseph L. Meek, Fort Hall, Vancouver. Pay the postage, and the letter will be sure to come.*

If the above is of any service, you are at liberty to use it.

Yours, &c.,

G. W. MANYPENNY.

The next is a letter from Mr. Peale, which will be sufficiently explained by the accompanying letter of Thomas J. Morgan, Esq., Clerk of the Senate of this State:

COLUMBUS, O., Feb. 17, 1843.

To Samuel Medary, Esq., Chairman of the committee to collect and report facts upon the subject of the Territory of Oregon:

MY DEAR SIR By the public papers I am advised of your appointment, by a meeting of citizens of Columbus, as Chairman of a committee to collect and report facts touching the deeply interesting question which now agitates the country, respecting the territory of Oregon.

Some days since, I received from THOMAS MORGAN the enclosed letter, directly bearing upon the subject. The high standing of Mr. Peale, added to his facilities for arriving at correct information, induces me to hand you his letter, which is placed at your disposal.

In referring to this letter, Mr. Morgan remarks, that "MR. TITIAN PEALE is a son of the late Mr. Peale, of Philadelphia, well known for his great respectability, and his eminence as a naturalist. He is a gentleman of high character and attainment; and is now engaged in arranging the extensive and splendid collection of curiosities, natural and artifi-

*This letter is particularly important, from the fact that it gives the mode of conveying letters to and from the Oregon Territory. Expeditions now set out early every spring from Upper Missouri, via Fort Hall, to Vancouver and Wallamette.—*Com.*

cial, which the Exploring Expedition culled in various climes."

Trusting that the letter of Mr. Peale (of whom, if I mistake not, you are an old friend and acquaintance) may throw some light upon the subject of your inquiries, I remain,

With high regard,

Your friend and ob't. serv't.,

THOMAS J. MORGAN.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 6th, 1843.

DEAR SIR:—Observing the interest which you have taken in the "Oregon Bill," now before Congress, I conclude that a few notes, coming from one who has recently travelled through a portion of the Oregon territory, will be acceptable to you, and probably be of use to some of your neighbors, who may feel disposed to profit by the inducements offered, should the bill pass and become a law.

Being a member of the scientific corps of the U. S. Exploring Expedition, in 1841, I had the misfortune to be wrecked, in the ship Peacock, at the mouth of the Columbia river, and subsequently travelled that portion of the country south of the Columbia river known as the Wallamette Valley, and thence across the mountains to California.

The soil, we observed, generally, on that route, although not as rich as that of the Mississippi valley, was still sufficiently so, when cultivated, to produce from 20 to 40 bushels of wheat to the acre, of as good quality as any I have ever seen in my native State*, (Pennsylvania,) which, added to facilities for settlers in finding the land ready for the plough, without the labor of clearing, while sufficiency of the finest timber is found on the banks of all the numerous streams, is alone sufficient to invite to the farther settlement of the country when known. But this is not all. The winters are so mild, that it has never yet been found necessary to house cattle, or provide winter food for them. They thrive and multiply beyond expectation.

Salmon are procured in great profusion in almost all the streams, and ready markets are found for them, as well as all the other products of the territory, in the ports of Mexico, South America, and the numerous islands of the Pacific Ocean. Thus, from its position in the Pacific, it has all the advantages which we possess in the Atlantic Ocean; gaining in the China, what might be considered as partly lost from our European trade.

The tract of country to which I have more particularly alluded, is about 250 miles long, including the mouth of the Columbia river, and reaching to about 150 miles from the coast. This tract of country I consider quite equal, if not superior to Pennsylvania, both in a commercial position, and capability in agricultural product, and much superior in its advantages for rearing cattle, &c., being generally interspersed with prairie and woodland.

Would the above hasty notes prove satisfactory to you or any of your friends, or if they only serve to awaken a spirit of inquiry, it will always be a source of pleasure to me in having communicated them.

With great respect, I have the honor to remain
Yours truly,

TITIAN R. PEALE.

To THOMAS MORGAN, Esq., of Washington, Pa.

* We have always understood that the wheat grown in California was the best in the world; and it appears to be equally good in Oregon. It is not affected by the freezing and thawing of winter, nor blighted by the hot sun, nor mildewed by the rains during earing time. Hence the stalk is well set, and the grain full, plump, bright, and heavy.—*Com.*

On the 6th of last April, the Rev. Mr. Waller writes from the Methodist Missionary Station, at Wallamette Falls, to his brother at Elba, New York. The letter first appeared in the Christian Advocate and Journal. These letters, being of a very recent date, are of proportionate interest. Mr. Wilkins writes from within about fifty miles of the Pacific and eight of the Columbia. The Rev. Mr. Walker dates 120 miles from the Ocean and 25 from the Columbia:

"WALLAMETTE FALLS, April 6, 1842.

Dear Brother:—Your last came duly to hand, and very much refreshed our spirits. Write every opportunity, being assured that intelligence from our friends is, to us in this distant land, like cold water to thirsty souls. You will see by my letter where I am stationed. This is, in some respects, a pleasant, though laborious field of labor. This is, and is destined to be, the great emporium of the interior of this country. Its water-power for manufacturing purposes is probably not rivalled in the States; at least, few and far between are the privileges which equal or excel it; besides, here is an excellent salmon fishery. As to the country, taking it all in all, it is a good farming and grazing country. The winters are so mild that cattle and horses do well without feeding. The country is well watered, and the inhabitants are, in general, healthy. The ague and fever is the most prevalent disease, although other diseases occur. On the sea-coast I believe it is more healthy than back in the country. So far as I and my family are concerned, we have been as healthy as we ever were in the States. Our little ones are quite as hearty, and as lively as the fawns that skip over the plains.

Produce of all kinds, except corn, does well here, so far as it has been fairly tried. Some corn has been raised. Wheat, peas and oats, I believe, so far as quality is concerned, cannot excel in any country. Potatoes are tolerable, and in some parts excellent. Indeed, it is my candid conviction, that an industrious and economical man can live as well, (fruit excepted) and make property as fast, as in almost any country, and far easier than in any part of the State of New York where I have lived. Let him bring with him a few hundred dollars in cash, or property, his farming utensils, &c., and settle on one of these delightful plains, and the first year he can support his family from the soil, as he has nothing to do but fence, plough and sow, and prepare a shelter or house for his family; yet he will have to encounter some difficulties incident to all new countries. Our mills are few and far between, and not all of the first order, but rather multiplying and improving; though a good millwright is very much wanted, as well as apparatus for building mills and a great many wholesome settlers, embracing some capitalists, who will open trade with the Islands and China, which can be done from this coast with great facility. But, first of all, our government ought to extend its jurisdiction and protection over this country. The state of the country is this respect, (especially for Americans) as well as in respect to a currency, is unpleasant. The Hudson's Bay Company seem determined to monopolize every thing as long as possible; yet in many respects they are quite accommodating, at least so far as it is for their interest. They profess to claim many of the best and most valuable parts of the country, by putting up a little hut without inhabitant, and forbid any one settling in those places. They made a claim at the Falls, on the side where I now am, about twelve years since, by digging a short mill

race, hewing a quantity of the timber, &c.; and a few years since they put up a small hut and covered it with bark.

Last fall an American took possession of a small island in the falls, but no sooner was it known at Fort Vancouver than a company of men was sent off with boards to put up a hut, and soon the Governor of the fort came up, greatly incensed, called the man a pilferer, and anything but good; he however went on. A cooper wished to build a shop near me, but was informed by orders from the fort that if he built his shop it would be torn down. He however went on and built; his shop still stands. These are naked facts; and others of the same kind, if necessary, can be forthcoming. By this you will have some clue to the state of things in this country in this respect.

I have written in great haste, as this is to be off early to-morrow morning. Besides, I have plenty of company, a number of men being here to buy salmon, of which I have the care. Others are on their way down the river. Indeed my house is at times, as to travellers, more like a public house than a Methodist preacher's.

Your affectionate brother,

ALVAN F. WALLER."

Mr. P. L. Edwards, who went out with Messrs. Lees, under Captain Wyeth, about ten years ago, to aid in civilizing the Flat Head Indians, drew up a memorial or a petition to Congress in 1839, which was signed by the Americans in the Oregon Territory. Mr. Edwards, very recently writing from Jefferson City, Missouri, alludes to the petition, and reiterates his confidence in its correctness:

"JEFFERSON CITY, Mo., Jan. 2, 1843.

MY DEAR SIR: In compliance with your request, I herewith enclose a printed copy of the memorial of the American settlers in the Oregon Territory, presented to the Congress of the United States, by Senator Linn, on the 28th of January, 1839. In reply to your inquiry as to the authorship of the memorial, and the degree of credit to which it is entitled, I will say that I drew it up myself, and I believe yet, as I did then, that it contains an accurate general sketch of the territory.

I have but little recent information of any interest from that country. A few weeks since, however, I received a letter from that very estimable man, the Rev. Daniel Lee, dated April the 26th, 1842, from which I learn that a schooner called "*The State of Oregon*," had been built below the Wallamette Falls, and would shortly sail for California. It is not, however, stated by whom the vessel is owned. A company has been formed for the erection of a mill at the Wallamette Falls. Several families had, the previous year, arrived from the United States by way of the Rocky Mountains—some of whom had settled in the Wallamette Valley, and others intended going to California. About twenty-five families had, during the same year, emigrated from Selkirk's Colony—a part of whom had settled in the Valley of the Cowlitz, and the others near Puget's Sound. The Hudson Bay Company had brought from California a large herd of sheep and cattle.

I cannot here refrain from expressing my pleasure that you have consented to prepare for the press your late speech in the House of Representatives on the condition and resources of that territory. Your views are in the main, highly appropriate and correct.

I am, &c.,

P. L. EDWARDS.

Col. Minor."

The petition referred to by Mr. Edwards is in the following words, viz:

"To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

"The undersigned, settlers south of the Columbia River, beg leave to represent to your honorable body, that our settlement, begun in 1832, has hitherto prospered beyond the most sanguine expectations of its first proprietors. The products of our fields have amply justified the most flattering descriptions of the fertility of soil, while the facilities which it affords for rearing cattle, are, perhaps, exceeded by those of no country in North America. The people of the United States, we believe, are not generally apprised of the extent of valuable country west of the Rocky Mountains. A large portion of the territory from the Columbia river south, to the boundary line between the United States and the Mexican Republic, and extending from the coast of the Pacific about two hundred and fifty or three hundred miles to the interior, is either well supplied with timber or adapted to pasture or agriculture. The fertile valleys of the Wallamette and Umpqua are varied with prairies and woodland, and intersected with lateral streams, presenting facilities for machinery. Perhaps no country, of the same latitude, is favored with a climate so mild. The winter rains, it is true, are an objection; but they are generally preferred to the snows and intense cold which prevails in the Northern part of the United States—nor does it ever remain more than a few hours.

"We need hardly allude to the commercial advantages of the Territory. Its happy position for trade with China, India and the Western coasts of America, will be readily recognized. The growing importance, however, of the islands of the Pacific, is not so generally known and appreciated. As these islands progress in civilization, their demand for the produce of more northern climates will increase.—Nor can any country supply them with beef, flour, &c., on terms so advantageous as this. A very successful effort has been recently made at the Sandwich Islands, in the cultivation of coffee and sugar cane. A colony here, will, in time, thence easily derive these articles and other tropical products in exchange for the produce of their own labor. We have thus briefly alluded to the natural resources of the country, and to its external relations. They are, in our opinion, strong inducements for the Government of the United States to take formal and speedy possession. We urge this step as promising to the general interest of the nation. But the advantages it may confer upon us, and the evils it may avert from our posterity are incalculable.

"Our social intercourse has thus far been prosecuted with reference to feelings of honor, to the feeling of dependence. Under this state of things, we have thus far prospered, but we cannot hope that it will continue. The agricultural and other resources of the country cannot fail to induce emigration and commerce. As our settlement begins to draw its supplies through other channels, the feeling of dependence upon the Hudson's Bay Company, to which we alluded as one of the safeguards of our social intercourse, will begin to diminish. We are anxious when we imagine what will be, what must be, the condition of so mixed a community, free from all legal restraint, and superior to that moral influence which has hitherto been the pledge of our safety.

"Our interests are identified with those of the country of our adoption. We flatter ourselves that we are a germ of a great State, and are anxious to give an early tone to the moral and intellectual character of its citizens. We are fully aware, too,

that the destinies of our posterity will be intimately affected by the character of those who emigrate to the country. The territory must populate. The Congress of the United States must say by whom. The natural resources of the country, with a well-judged civil code, will invite a good community.—But a good community will hardly emigrate to a country which has no protection for life or property. Inquiries have already been submitted to some of us for information of the country. In return, we can only speak of a country highly favored of nature. We can boast of no civil code. We can promise no protection but the ulterior resort of self-defence.—By whom, then, shall our country be populated?—By the reckless and unprincipled adventurer! not by the hardy and enterprising pioneer of the West.—By the renegade of civilization from the Rocky Mountains; by the profligate, deserted seamen from Polynesia, and the unprincipled sharpers from Spanish America. Well are we assured that it will cost the Government of the United States more to reduce elements so discordant to social order, than to promote our permanent peace and prosperity by a timely action of Congress. Nor can we suppose that so vicious a population could be relied on in case of a rupture between the United States and any other power.

“Our intercourse with the natives among us, guided much by the same influence which has prompted harmony among ourselves, has been generally pacific. But the same causes which will interrupt harmony among ourselves, will also interrupt our friendly relations with the natives. It is, therefore, of primary importance, both to them and to us, that the Government should take energetic measures to secure the execution of all laws affecting Indian trade and the intercourse of white men and Indians. We have thus briefly shown that the security of our persons and our property, the hopes and destinies of our children, are involved in the objects of our petition. We do not presume to suggest the manner in which the country should be occupied by the Government, nor the extent to which our settlement should be encouraged. We confide in the wisdom of our National Legislators, and leave the subject to their candid deliberations; and your petitioners will ever pray.”

This might appear like a digression from the present subject; but the connection is so close with the *commerce* of the country, if not the *soil* and *products*, that the introduction of this memorial, at this place, must, at least, be pardonable.

A recent writer (J. K. Townsend, the Ornithologist,) in the National Intelligencer, who spent two years in the Oregon, from 1834 to 1836, gives some additional facts, and confirms some given by other, but perhaps not more authentic writers:

“The rainy season commences here about the middle of October, and continues until the first of April. During this period the weather is almost uniformly dull, foggy or rainy. Sometimes rain falls incessantly for the space of two or three weeks. Occasionally, during the winter months, there will be a light fall of snow, and in the winter of 1835 and '6, the river was frozen over. This intensity of cold, however, continued but a few days, and was said to be very unusual. The general range of the thermometer (Fahrenheit's) during that season was from 36 deg. to 48 deg., but for three or four days the mercury was as low as 25 deg.

“In the vicinity of Fort Vancouver the cattle

graze during the whole winter; no stabling or stall-feeding is ever requisite, as the extensive plains produce the finest and most abundant crops of excellent prairie grass.

“In choosing a site for settlement on the main river, it is always necessary to bear in mind the periodical inundations. Fort Vancouver itself, although built upon a high piece of land, at the distance of six hundred yards from the common rise of the tides, is sometimes almost reached by the freshets in early spring. The soil here on both sides of the river is a rich black loam, the base being basaltic rock.

“The face of the country from Fort George (Astoria) to Vancouver—a distance of eighty miles—is very much of a uniform character, consisting of alluvial meadows along the river banks, alternating with forest of pine, oak, &c.; while behind are extensive plains, some of which receive estuaries of the river, while others are watered by lakes or ponds. The pine forests are very extensive, the trees being of great size, and the timber extraordinarily beautiful. All the timber of the genus *pinus*, of which there are a great number of species, is gigantic. I measured with Dr. Gairdner, surgeon of the fort, a pine of the species *Douglas*, which had been prostrated by the wind. Its height was above two hundred feet, and its circumference forty-five feet!—Large as was this specimen, its dimensions are much exceeded by one measured by the late David Douglas. The height of this tree was nearly three hundred feet, and its circumference fifty-six feet! The cones of this pine, according to Mr. Douglas, were from twelve to fifteen inches length, resembling in size and form sugar loaves. Oak timber of various kinds is abundant along the river, as well as the buttonwood, balsam poplar, ash, sweet gum, beech, and many other useful kinds, but no hickory or walnut.

“The Governor of Fort Vancouver, who is an active agriculturist, has exerted himself for several years in raising whatever appears adapted to the soil. Wheat, rye, barley, peas, and culinary vegetables of all kinds, are raised in ample quantity.

“Fruits of various kinds, apples, peaches, plums, &c., do remarkably well. I remember being particularly struck, upon my arrival at Vancouver in the autumn, with the display of apples in the garden of the fort. The trees were crowded with fruit, so that every limb required to be sustained by a prop. The apples were literally packed along the branches, and so closely that I could compare them to nothing more aptly than to ropes of onions.

“In the vicinity of Walla-Walla, or Ney Perces Fort, the country, in every direction for many miles exhibits an arid and cheerless prospect. The soil is deep sand, and the plain upon which the fort stands produces nothing but bushes of dry aromatic wormwood. Along the borders of the small streams, however, the soil is exceedingly rich and productive; and on these strips of land the superintendent raises his corn, and the vegetables necessary for the consumption of his people.*

*“We left Snake Fort,” says Mr. Spaulding, the missionary, “on the twenty-second of August, and arrived at Wallawalla on the third of September. Wallawalla is on the South side of Columbia river, nine miles below the mouth of Snake or Lewis river, and at the junction of Wallawalla and Columbia rivers. It was built by the Hudson's Bay Company fifteen years ago. No timber, except floodwood, is found within twenty-five miles. The soil is good in small spots on the Wallawalla river. All kinds of grains and vegetables produce well. Cattle surpass in fatness any thing I ever saw in the United States. Horses are as cheap, and about as plenty, as in our country—beautiful and usually

"The prong-horned antelope occasionally ranges these plains; the black-tailed or mule deer is found in the vicinity; grouse of several species are very abundant, and the large prairie hare is common.—Vancouver, ducks, geese and swans swarm in immense numbers. These are killed by the Indians and taken to the fort as articles of trade. For a single duck, one load of powder and shot is given; for a goose, two; and for a swan four loads. For a deer, ten loads of ammunition or a bottle of rum is the usual price."

"Early in May, the salmon are first seen entering the river, and the Columbia and all its tributaries teem with these delicious fish. The Indians take great numbers by various modes—subsisting almost wholly upon them during their stay, and drying and packing them away in thatched huts to be used for winter store. The salmon also forms a chief article of food for the inmates of the fort, and hundreds of casks are salted down every season."

"About twenty miles above this, in the Wallamette valley, is the spot chosen by the Methodist missionaries for their settlement, and here also, a considerable number of the retired servants of the company have established themselves. The soil of this delightful valley is rich beyond comparison, and the climate considerably milder than that of Vancouver. Rain rarely falls, even in the winter season, but the dews are sufficiently heavy to compensate for its absence. The epidemic of the country, ague and fever, is scarcely known here. In short, the Wallamette valley is a terrestrial paradise, to which I have known some exhibit so strong an attachment as to declare that, notwithstanding the few privations which must necessarily be experienced by the settlers of a new country, no consideration could ever induce them to return to their former homes. J. K. T."

Mr. Kelley, in his memoir, (H. R. 1839,) informs us that—

"The Wallamette,† an important branch of the Columbia river, has its head waters near the sources of the Umpqua, receives numerous tributary streams from the President's range, to which its course runs nearly parallel, and pours its floods into the Columbia, about eighty miles from the ocean. On its upper course it is said to be broken into sev-

milk-white or cream color. All animals feed out through winter, as there is but little snow. The grass is of superior quality, called the buffalo grass, a fine, short, bunch grass, covering the whole face of the earth. This grass is one among the thousand marks of the goodness of God in providing for all climates and all sections of the earth. It might naturally be supposed—there being no rain or dew in this country for six or seven months in the year—every thing would be parched by the sun, and there would be no means of subsistence for animals; but this grass remains through the season quite fresh, retaining all its virtue, and forms very healthy food for winter. As soon as we came to it, about six days before arriving at Wallawalla, our animals would leave the green grass on the streams, and seek this on the sand hills and plain."

†In copying from various authors there appears to be something like repetition, but it is thought better to let the reader discriminate between each writer's views than for the committee to do so in all cases. The writers generally agree, however, where they are describing the same region of country, at about the same periods of time. But the Oregon presents such a variety of soil, scenery and climate, of mountain, plain and desert, that accounts must depend on the region the traveller witnessed.

eral beautiful cataracts. For the last hundred miles above its junction, it traverses a comparatively level and open country, and, with the exception of one short portage, is navigable for this whole distance by boats drawing three or four feet of water. It penetrates the ridge of hills bordering the southern shore of the Columbia, and at that place falls over three several terraces of basaltic rock, making in all a descent of twenty-five feet. These falls are twenty miles from the Columbia. Below this point its banks are low, and subject to inundation in the season of "freshets" or vernal floods. It has two mouths, formed by the position of a group of three islands, whose longitudinal extent is sixteen miles, and which, though lying chiefly in the Columbia, project into the current of the Wallamette, and divide its waters in the manner described. This river has been sometimes misnamed the "Multonomah," with reference to a tribe of Indians, now extinct, who formerly occupied the land lying around its southern entrance into the Columbia.

"In beauty of scenery, fertility of soil, and other natural advantages, no portion of our country surpasses that which is found upon the Wallamette. The whole valley of this river abounds in white oak and other valuable timber. Fringes of trees grow along the margin of the stream, and back of these are rich bottom lands or prairie ground of inexhaustible fertility, and adorned with all the wealth of vegetation. From these prairies, which are sometimes a few rods and sometimes several miles wide, often rise round isolated hills, heavy wooded, and presenting a lovely contrast to the sea of grasses and flowers from which they spring."

"I have now reached the Columbia river. The few statements which I propose to make concerning this noble stream, will refer to matters which may not come within the knowledge of the committee from other sources."

"I made surveys of the Columbia from the Wallamette to the ocean, the results of which appear upon the map which I had the honor to transmit to the committee."

"For about 100 miles above its mouth, the banks of the Columbia are generally above the reach of inundation. The periodical floods begin about the first of May, and subside about the middle of June, and of the distance of which I have above spoken, it may be that one-tenth part is reached by the waters."

"The climate of this region," he adds, "is mild, salubrious, and healthful. During the whole winter of 1834-'5, settlers on the Columbia were engaged in ploughing and sowing their lands, and cattle were grazing on the prairie. One of the factor's of the Hudson's Bay Company, who cultivated an extensive farm on the northern bank of the Columbia, informed me that he sowed one hundred and fifty bushels of wheat during the months of January and February. I knew of but three falls of snow during that winter in the vicinity of the river. These occurred in February, and neither of them exceeded three inches in depth. The 28th of February was the coldest day in the season; rain fell during the forenoon. It then cleared off cold, and, for a few hours, houses, trees, and fields, sparkled in an icy covering."

"During the winter, nearly every day witnessed an alternation of sunshine and rain; the forenoons being mild and clear, and the afternoons ending in showers or drizzling rain."

"The healthfulness of this country is unquestionable. With the exception of some few low and swampy spots on the banks of the Columbia, at and below the junction of the Wallamette, the whole region of the Columbia enjoys a clear and fine atmosphere, and an exemption from all the ordinary

causes of epidemic disease. It is said that till the year 1830 fever and ague had not been known. In that year, as I was informed, the Indians suffered from intermittent fevers. But there was no reason to attribute this mortality to climate. On the other hand, it is believed that the excessive filth and slovenly habits of the inhabitants of the English settlement at Vancouver were the occasion of the disease. Vancouver itself is situated on a high, delightful, and salubrious spot, and nothing but gross and unpardonable habits of life could render it unwholesome.

"All veritable evidence speaks favorably of the climate of this beautiful tract of country, and none but ignorant or deceitful witnesses have ever testified to the contrary.

"The valley of the Wallamette is the finest country I ever saw, whether for the gratification of the eye or the substantial comforts of life, for all the natural elements of wealth or for its adaption to the wants and happiness of civilized man. It declares to the intelligent observer, beyond the power of doubt, that it is intended to be the habitation of myriads of civilized and happy men.

"So far as I could learn from intelligent and credible witnesses, the country north of the Columbia, to the 54th parallel, possesses nearly the same character which I have described as belonging to the region which I myself traversed."

Captain Wyeth, in his exceedingly interesting Memoir, says:

"Having heretofore spoken of the agriculture of this region, there remains little more to say on that head, except that what I have called the first division would furnish lands reasonably fertile to almost any extent for the production of wheat and all the small grains, tobacco, hemp, hay, potatoes, &c.

"That which I have called the second division, the finest grazing in North America, for producing hides, tallow, beef, and wool, most of which articles must find a good market on the coasts and islands of a sea so extensive as the Pacific ocean, almost the whole navigation of which is supplied with standing articles of food from the United States and Europe, and others of which would bear transportation to any part of the world.

"Among the indigenous productions of the country that would be useful, is timber, for the various uses of the people, including an abundance of white oak of good quality, and spars of any magnitude. The firs of the country are good timber, but not so valuable as white pine for house building; all of which, to some extent, would be articles of profitable export, and probably the uses for them in that sea will increase, so as in time to give an extensive demand.

"The salmon which ascend all the rivers of this country are extremely numerous, and by proper methods may be taken in any numbers; they are of several sorts, all equal, and some superior, to those of the United States. Persons who visit only the mouths of the rivers have no idea of the countless numbers which ascend them; it is only near the falls of the streams, and as you approach their heads, that their immense numbers can be appreciated. They enter the river from May to September, and the strongest keep mid current, and only turn to the small streams and shores as they begin to tire; it is chiefly then that they are taken by the

Indians. Since 1829, an intermittent fever has carried off vast numbers of these Indians, and frightened away many more; and as it prevails below the California mountains in the salmon season, far less opportunities are offered of trading fish of them than formerly; but this is of little importance, as cargoes could never in any case be procured from their exertions. This trade, as a source of wealth to the country in its infancy, will be of great importance; with small expense of time and money, it would be available in one season, and by its returns give much ease to the first settlers.

"One of the first wants of this country will be salt for the use of the inhabitants, and for the preservation of those articles of export which require it. Far in the interior there is abundance of Glauber, Epsom, and common salt. In the salt plains of those regions the two former prevail, and also somewhat in the Great Salt lake, so that care must be taken, in boiling down the water, to take the first deposit, in order to obtain salt for use. There are, also, large veins or beds of rock salt, quite pure, in the mountains of the interior. These are, however, south of latitude 42 deg. north. Crystals of salt have been found at the Big Wood river, which empties into Lewis's or snake river, in latitude 44 deg. 32 min. north, longitude 117 deg. 1 min. west; and there is, without doubt, on the heads of that river, a deposit. Sandstone is there found, which usually accompanies it. In this division, it may be of use at some very remote period, but cannot at present be considered one of the resources of the country. I am not aware that the article has been found in what I have called the second division of the country, but its geological formation gives reason to think it exists; and should this section become, as it must, a grazing country it would be of great value.—About thirty miles up the Wallamette, salt springs have been found; they are but slightly impregnated, and I conceive of no value, inasmuch as any amount of salt can be made on the seaboard during the long and perfectly dry summer, at far less expense than evaporating their weak waters. The Sandwich Islands, from which vessels must always return in ballast, will supply any quantity of salt at a very low rate.

"At a more remote period, fuel will be an article of value. Coal has been found only on the Cowlitz river. I have seen only a specimen; it appeared to me what is called lignite; what its quality may be, or in what quantity it exists, I am unable to say; but it will be long before fuel will be wanted, where trees sometimes attain to three hundred feet in height, and twelve to fourteen feet diameter, and very often to that of two hundred feet and proportionate thickness, and where forests are very dense.

"There is in some parts obsidian, pumice stone, and fuller's earth; I am not able to say if these articles are of any value. No metals have, I believe, as yet, been found. The country which is accessible is almost entirely volcanic, covered deep with ancient lavas; it has been traversed mostly with a view of trading or hunting beaver; the mountains, almost inaccessible, afford no object to the trapper, and have

been little examined, and from them alone may metals be hoped for; no doubt, as in most other countries, they will be found when extended population requires them.

"Facilities of communication and of manufacturing may be in some measure considered among the resources of a country. The rivers are decidedly bad; no one of them affords good navigation for steamboats, for any great distance; they must, I think, always be inconvenient and dangerous on their rapid and rocky character. The continuous ranges of mountains, lying parallel with the coast, will render very difficult the construction of railroads extending into the interior, and possibly rocky formation may underlay the earth, so as to render any extension to the south or north very expensive. Canals could be constructed; and, in a country where the winters are so mild, they might be preferable to railroads; there would be plenty of water to supply locks, at almost any level; the melting of the mountain snows, which are close at hand, would afford water in summer, and the rains would keep up the supply in winter. The bad character of the natural means of transportation and passage; and the difficulty of improvement, is the worst feature of this country.

"Power for manufacturing purposes is supplied by every stream, and often at short intervals on the same stream; probably no country in the world, equally near the seacoast, affords so many waterfalls as that part of the country between the coast and the California mountains, and in no country are they more regularly supplied by melting snows in summer and by the almost constant rains in winter."

Our direct trade with China in 1821, in furs, on American account, as shown in the report of Mr. Pendleton, in a table prepared at the Treasury Department, was \$142,399—in 1833, \$109,695, and in 1840, \$2,368.

This has been no doubt effected by the grasping disposition of the British occupants of this Territory, and the inexcusable conduct of our own Government, in not affording protection in that quarter.

Mr. Pendleton, after exhibiting this almost total loss of our trade in that Territory, remarks:

"This table, exhibiting a gradually diminishing trade in furs from the period that the hunting and trading of British subjects in Oregon was authorized by the convention of 1818, is the best commentary upon the principles and provisions of that convention. Individual disinterestedness or generosity may surrender to general participation the advantages and privileges of an exclusive right; but the wiser, safer, and more general rule of national action, is in every grant to demand an equivalent.—The convention of 1818, was a departure from this salutary rule, and its consequences we read in the above table—the uncompensated transfer to the Hudson Bay Company of all that trade which our own citizens have lost. This simple statement affords a lesson by which we shall do well to profit in time, before our own indifference, forbearance, and neglect shall render utterly worthless the object for which we have so long contended. If the successful and

beneficial assertion of our right shall ever be made, it must be made now. Further acquiescence in the exclusive possession of the Hudson Bay Company, (for north of the Columbia, it is in fact exclusive,) if not an absolute surrender of our claim, is what is almost equivalent to it—an abandonment of the game, which constitutes its principal value, to the annihilation of thriftless hunting and indiscriminate slaughter.

"From six to eight hundred men annually go to the Rocky Mountains, on hunting and trading expeditions who collect a large amount of furs; the value of which, however, the committee has no means of ascertaining with any degree of accuracy. This trade would greatly and rapidly increase under the protection which the contemplated posts will afford."

The convention or treaty of 1818, referred to, authorized a *reciprocal* trade in the Territory.

Capt. Pierce, of Boston, formerly engaged in the trade of the Northwest, expresses himself freely on this subject:

"Boston, May 1, 1842.

"Sir: Thinking it may be interesting or important to you to know of some of the late operations and present plans of the British Hudson Bay Company in the North Pacific ocean, I beg leave to present to your notice some facts in relation to the same, and which have come to my knowledge from personal observation, or from sources entitled to the fullest credit.

"All that extensive line of coast comprehending the Russian possessions on the North-west coast of America, from Mount St. Elias South to the latitude of 54 deg. 40 min. North, (the last being the boundary line between the Russian and American Territories,) together with the sole and exclusive right or privilege of frequenting all ports, bays, sounds, rivers, &c., within said Territory, and establishing forts and trading with the Indians, has been leased or granted by the Russian American Fur Company to the British Hudson Bay Company for the term of ten years from January, 1842, and for which the latter are to pay, annually, four thousand fur seal skins, or the value thereof in money, at the rate of thirty-two shillings each—say £6,400 sterling, or \$30,720.

"In the above named lease the Russians have, however, reserved to themselves the island of Sitka, or New Archangel, in which place, you probably are aware, the Russians have a large settlement—the depot and head quarters of their fur trade with the Fox Islands, Aleutian Islands, and the continental shore westward of Mount St. Elias. All the trading establishments of the Russians lately existing at Tumgass Stickene, and other places within said Territory, leased to the Hudson Bay Company, have of consequence been broken up. Thus the Hudson Bay Company, not content with monopolizing the heretofore profitable trade of the Americans, of supplying the Russian settlements on the North-west coast, have now completely cut them off also from all trade with the most valuable fur regions in the world.

"Whether the arrangements made between the Russians and English, above alluded to, are conformable to the treaties existing between the United States on the one part, and those nations respectively on the other, I leave to your better knowledge to determine.

"With the doings of the Hudson Bay Company at Poger's Sound and the Columbia river you are doubtless fully informed; those, however, lately

commenced by them in California will admit of my saying a few words.

"At San Francisco they have purchased a large house, as a trading establishment and depot for merchandise; and they intend this year to have a place of the same kind at each of the principal ports in Upper California. Two vessels are building in London, intended for the same trade—that is, for the coasting trade; and, after completing their cargoes, to carry them to England. These things, with others, give every indication that it is the purpose of the Hudson Bay Company to monopolize the whole hide and tallow trade of the coast of California—a trade which now employs more than half a million of American capital.

"At the Sandwich Islands the company have a large trading establishment, and have commenced engaging in the commerce of the country, with evident designs to monopolize it if possible, and to drive off the Americans, who have heretofore been its chief creators and conductors.

"I have been informed by one of the agents of the Hudson Bay Company, that the agricultural and commercial operations of the English at Puget's Sound, Columbia river, California, and Sandwich Islands, are carried on, not actually by the Hudson Bay Company, but by what may be termed a branch of it—by gentlemen who are the chief members and stockholders of said company, and who have associated themselves under the firm of Pelby, Simpson, & Co. in London, and with a capital of more than \$15,000,000.

"Seeing these companies then, marching with iron footsteps to the possession of the most valuable portion of the country in the Northern Pacific, and considering too, the immense amount of their capital, the number, enterprise, and energy of their agents, and the policy pursued by them, great reason is there to fear that American commerce in that part of the world must soon lower its flag. But, sir, it is to be hoped that our government will soon do something to break up the British settlements in the Oregon Territory, and thereby destroy the source from which now emanate the most dire evils to American interests in the Western world. In the endeavor to bring about that desirable object, you have done much; and every friend to his country, every person interested in the commerce of the Pacific, must feel grateful for the valuable services rendered them by you.

"With great respect, your obedient servant,
HENRY A. PIERCE.

"HON. LEWIS F. LINN."

Captain Spaulding of the Ship *Lausanne*, speaks with no less feeling on the subject of British aggression:

"At present, the company cultivate about three thousand acres of land, and raise about eighteen thousand bushels of wheat, fourteen thousand bushels of potatoes, three thousand bushels of peas, and have both flour and saw-mills; they have seven thousand head of cattle, two thousand sheep, hogs, &c., and have engaged to supply the Russians with eight thousand bushels of wheat annually, and I do not know how many thousand pounds of butter at 6d. sterling per pound; they have a large number of men in their employ, four ships, two schooners, and a steamboat; they have several forts on the south side of the Columbia, and take out of the river probably not less than five hundred thousand dollars in value per annum; while our Government remains perfectly passive and unconcerned. I must confess, when I saw all this, I felt ashamed that I was an American. I am convinced that not another nation under heaven would submit to it, or could be so negligent of the interests of its people. The com-

pany have all the cattle, sheep, &c., but will not sell to a settler a single cow or a sheep; they will, I believe, sometimes sell a pig, but nothing else alive—not even a horse; nothing that breathes.—They have now contracted to supply the Russians at Sidka, and all the northern parts, with goods of all kinds that the Russians require, at twenty five per cent. advance on the London invoice, to be delivered at the ports where they are wanted, without charge for freight or expense of any kind; thus driving the Americans off the coast. It is also well understood that they purpose taking possession of the Sandwich Islands, which the British Government claim under an old grant from *Tamaahmaah*. There is too good reason to believe (indeed the opinion is prevalent at Oregon) that the grasping ambition of the British will not with all this be satisfied, but that they intend to add even *California* to their possessions; meaning and intending thereby to obtain possession of the bay of San Francisco, which is decidedly the best place on the whole west coast of America for a naval depot, and where the combined navies of the whole world could anchor with perfect safety; being accessible at all times for vessels of any draught of water.

"The colony from the United States is situated on the Wallamette, a branch of the Columbia, about ninety miles from the mouth of the river, which is, undoubtedly, the finest grazing and wheat country in Oregon. At present, it consists of about seventy families, who raise considerable grain, and have about three thousand head of cattle. The mission last year raised one thousand bushels of wheat, and made butter, cheese, &c., enough for their own use. They have five hundred head of cattle and two hundred horses, and last year they sowed four hundred bushels of wheat, one hundred and twenty bushels of peas, and planted a large quantity of potatoes and vegetables of all descriptions. They have hogs, poultry, &c., in abundance. Last year they raised over fifteen hundred bushels of potatoes. The extent of the country comprising the Wallamette Valley is about three hundred miles long, and two hundred broad, interspersed with ravines of wood, generally of sufficient quantities for fuel and fencing.—The land in its natural state is usually ready for the plough, and is very fertile, producing from twenty-five to forty bushels of wheat to the acre; and the climate is so mild that the cattle subsist in the fields without fodder or shelter of any kind being prepared or provided for them through the winter. Salmon can be taken at the Wallamette falls (which, however, the British have taken possession of, and compelled our people to build their mills at the falls above) with little trouble, from May to September in almost any quantity. I have no hesitation in saying that ten thousand barrels might be taken per annum. Probably no place in the world offers greater inducements to emigrants. Provisions might readily be procured to support one thousand emigrants at any time. Flour was this season high, in consequence of a want of mills—a difficulty that is now obviated by the erection of two new ones, viz: one by Mr. McKee, and one by the mission; as also two saw mills. Wheat is nominally worth one dollar per bushel, beef six cents per pound, pork ten, cows fifty dollars each, oxen sixty, horses thirty-five. Potatoes being about twenty-five cts. per bushel. Labor is worth about thirty-five dollars per month, the laborer being bound by his employer."

In 1836, General Jackson, aware of the importance of this territory, sent out Mr. Slacum, a young man well qualified for the undertaking, to explore its interior condition. He speaks of four rivers that fall into

the Pacific south of the Columbia, two of which the schooner Cadborough entered, drawing eight feet of water. The Umpqua he described as equal in size to the Wallamette. The lands equally good and well timbered. One of these rivers, called Rogue or Smith's river, "abounds in the finest timber west of the Rocky Mountains; and it may be fairly estimated that the valleys of these rivers, certainly within the jurisdiction of the United States, contain at least 14,000,000 acres of land of the first quality, equal to the best lands of Missouri and Illinois." He gives a full account of the operations of the Hudson Bay Company at Vancouver.

"I shall endeavor," he says, "to point out the enterprise of this company, and the influence they exercise over the Indian tribes within our acknowledged lines of territory, and their unauthorized introduction of large quantities of British goods within the territorial limits of the United States. Fort Vancouver, the principal depot of the Hudson Bay Company, west of the Rocky Mountains, stands on a gentle acclivity, four hundred yards from the shore, on the north bank of the Columbia, or Oregon river, about one hundred miles from its mouth. The principal buildings are enclosed by a picket forming an area of 750 by 450 feet. Within the pickets there are thirty-four buildings of all descriptions, including officers' dwelling houses, workshops for carpenters, blacksmiths, wheel-wrights, coopers, tinners, &c., all of wood, except the magazine for powder, which is of brick. Outside, and very near the fort, there are forty-nine cabins for laborers and mechanics, a large and commodious barn, and seven buildings attached thereto, a hospital and large boat house on the shore, six miles above the fort. On the north bank the Hudson Bay Company have erected a saw mill on a never failing stream of water that falls into the Columbia; cuts 2000 to 2400 feet of lumber daily; employs twenty eight men, chiefly Sandwich Islanders, and ten yoke of oxen; depth of water four fathoms at the mill, where the largest ships of the company take in their cargoes for the Sandwich Islands market.

"The farm at Vancouver contains, at this time, about 3000 acres of land, fenced and under cultivation, employing generally one hundred men, chiefly Canadians and half-breed Iroquois. The mechanics are Europeans. These, with the factors, traders, clerks and domestics, may be estimated at thirty. The laborers and mechanics live outside the fort in good log cabins; two or three families generally under one roof; and, as nearly every man has a wife, or lives with an Indian or half-breed woman, and as each family has from two to five slaves, the whole number of persons about Vancouver may be estimated at 750 to 800 souls. The police of the establishment is as strict as in the best regulated military garrison. The men are engaged for the term of five years, at the rate of £17 to £15 per annum; but as the exchange is reduced to currency at the rate of five shillings to the dollar, the pound sterling is valued at \$4; hence the price of labor is \$5 66¢ to \$6 66¢ per month."

"There was a species of clay to be met with, out of which the Indians manufacture pots, jars and dishes. It is very fine and light, of an agreeable smell, and of a brown color, spotted with yellow, and dissolves readily in the mouth. Vessels manufactured of it are said to impart a pleasant smell and flavor to liquids. These mountains abound also with mine-

ral earths, or chalks of various colors; especially two kinds of ochre—one a pale, the other a light red, like vermilion—much used by the Indians in painting their bodies."—*Head Waters of Snake—Irving's Astoria.*

"The soil in the neighborhood of the sea coast is of a brown color inclining to red, and generally poor; being a mixture of clay and gravel. In the interior, and especially in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains, the soil is generally blackish, though sometimes yellow. It is frequently mixed with marl and with marine substances, in a state of decomposition."—*Astoria.*

"Among the flowering vines is one deserving of particular notice. Each flower is composed of six leaves or petals, about three inches in length, and a beautiful crimson, the inside spotted with white.—Its leaves, of a fine green, are oval, and disposed by threes. This plant climbs upon the trees without attaching itself to them; when it has reached the topmost branches, it descends perpendicularly, and as it continues to grow, extends from tree to tree, until its various stalks interlace the grove like the rigging of a ship. The stems or trunks of this vine are tougher and more flexible than willow, and are from fifty to one hundred fathoms in length. From the fibres the Indians manufacture baskets of such close texture as to hold water."—*Astoria.*

"We travelled four hours, on the 25th, to another branch of Lewis' or Snake river, and encamped in a large pleasant valley, commonly called Jackson's large Hole. It is fertile and well watered with a branch of Lewis river coming from the southeast, and another of considerable magnitude, coming from the east northeast, which is the outlet of Jackson's lake, which is a very considerable body of water laying back of the Trois Tetons." There are also many very large springs of water of uncommon clearness, which issue from the foot of the surrounding mountains. This vale is well supplied with grass of excellent quality, which was very grateful to our horses and mules, and the avidity with which they helped themselves seemed to say, they would be remunerated for past deprivations.

"Flax is a spontaneous production of this country. In every thing, except that it is perennial, it resembles the flax which is cultivated in the United States—the stalk, the bowl, the seed, the blue flower, closed in the day time and open in the evening and morning. The Indians use it for making fishing nets. Fields of this flax might be managed by the husbandman in the same manner as meadows for hay. It would need to be mowed like grass, for the roots are too large and run too deep into the earth to be pulled as ours is; and an advantage which this would have, is, that there would be a saving of ploughing and sowing. Is it not worthy of the experiment of our agricultural societies?"—*Parker.*

"The country along the Rocky Mountains, for several hundred miles in length and about fifty wide, is a high, level plain, and in all its parts extremely fertile, and in many places covered with a growth of tall, long-leaved pine. The plain is chiefly interrupted near the streams of water, where the hills are steep and lofty, but the soil is good, being unincumbered by much stone, and possess more timber than the level country under shelter of these hills; the bottom lands skirt the margin of the rivers, and, though narrow and confined, are still fertile and rarely inundated. Nearly the whole of this wide-spread tract is covered with a profusion of grass and plants, which are, at this time, as high as the knee. Among these are a variety of esculent

* Three high peaked mountains north of Fort Hall—called *Pilot Knobs* by Mr. Hunt.

plants and roots, acquired without much difficulty, and yielding not only a nutritious, but a very agreeable food. The air is pure and dry, the climate quite as mild, if not milder, than the same parallels of latitude in the Atlantic States, and must be equally healthy; for all the disorders which we have witnessed, may fairly be imputed more to the nature of the diet than to any intemperance of climate."—*Lewis & Clark's Expedition.*

"On the upper part of the Walla-Walla river, is a delightful situation for a missionary establishment, having many advantages not found for some distance around. It is, however, not so central for either the Nez Percés, Cayuses, or Walla-Wallas, as could be desired. Yet, a mission located on this fertile field would draw around an interesting settlement, who would fix down to cultivate the soil, and to be instructed. How easily might the plough go through these valleys, and what rich and abundant harvests might be gathered by the hand of industry. But even now the spontaneous growth of these vast plains, including millions of acres, yield in such profusion, that not the fiftieth part becomes the food of organic life. In some places, bands of Indian horses are seen; the timid deer or hare; the weary marmot, and the swift gazelle. But these, with all the other animals and insects, consume so small a portion, that it can hardly be seen that there are any occupants to these wild fields."—*Parker.*

"There is a singular circumstance attending all the pine of this country, which is, that when consumed, it yields not the slightest particle of ashes." *Lewis & Clark's Expedition.* We have not seen this noticed by any other writer.

Mountain of Marble.

"After a few hours ride, (from Fort Colville down the Columbia,) on the morning of the 31st, we recrossed the Spokein river just above its entrance into the Columbia. This large valley is capable of supporting a much more numerous population than now obtain a subsistence by hunting and fishing. The Indians residing here afforded us very cheerfully all the assistance we needed in ferrying the river. In the neighborhood of this place I discovered a mountain of rich and very beautiful marble, situated on the south side of the Columbia river; some sections are pure white, or saccharine, while others are beautifully clouded with blue and brown. It effervesces freely with sulphuric acid. This will in time become very valuable; for being upon navigable waters, it can be transported into various countries. Several miles below this marble location I was interested with the juxtaposition of granite and basalt."—*Parker.*

Inhabitants.

Natives.—The Indians inhabiting the country west of the Rocky Mountains are greatly inferior to those upon our immediate borders, and within our very vicinity. They live in a very rude state, pay no attention to agriculture, and trust to hunting and fishing for a subsistence. The tribes immediately upon the coast are the Clatsops, the Chinooks, the Chillamucks, Skilluts, &c. Those east of the coast chain of mountains, are the Eskeloots, Wallah-Wallahs, Sokuks, Nez Percés (Pierced Noses,) Shoshones, Okanagans, &c. They are known by the general name of "Flat Head Indians."

These Indians are generally pacific, and those living in the region of the country lying between Lewis and the Columbia rivers and the Rocky Mountains, are fond of dress,* rude and wild as are their condition. They are also very friendly disposed; and Mr. Parker says extremely anxious to receive instructions from the Missionaries. Near the head waters of Lewis or Snake river, the Crows and Black Feet abound; the most hostile and thieving races of natives about the mountains, on the West or East, except, perhaps, the Sioux on this side.

The natives along the waters of the Columbia live principally upon fish and roots; the Columbia furnishing the former in great abundance during the summer months, and the soil the latter, in considerable quantities in many places.

Americans.—The inlet to the Columbia river was first discovered by Captain Gray of Boston, in 1791, and in 1792 he entered it, and sailed up it many miles. He gave the river the name of his ship, COLUMBIA. The territory which supplies this river with its immense body of water, is called OREGON, says Mr. Sherman, "from a tradition said to have prevailed among the Indians near Lake Superior, of the existence of a mighty river rising in that vicinity, and emptying its waters into the Pacific."

In the fall of 1805, Lewis and Clark crossed the Rocky Mountains, built a fort at the mouth of the Columbia river, and spent the winter there. They left on their return route, March 22, 1806. Some time after this, the American Fur Company es-

* "The dress of the women," says Mr. Parker the Missionary who was in that country in '35, and '7, speaking more particularly of the Shoshone and Nez Percés, "does not vary much from the men, excepting, that instead of the shirt, they have what may be called a frock coming down to the ankles. Many of them wear a large cape made of the same material, and often highly ornamented with long oblong beads of blue, red, purple and white, arranged in curved lines covering the whole. Some of the daughters of the Chiefs, when clothed in their clean white dresses made of antelope skins, with the fully ornamented capes coming down to the waist, and mounted upon spirited steeds, going at full speed, their ornaments glittering in the sunbeams, make an appearance that would not lose in comparison with equestrian ladies of the east." Probably these capes gave the first idea of mantillas, dresses much safer for riding in than those the most fashionable in civilized society!

† Lewis and Clark were the first white men that ever crossed the Rocky Mountains, or explored the waters that fall into the Columbia. Their route was from the head waters of the Missouri, as dotted on the map to Clarke's river, and the Kooksookoo, and for more than a thousand miles in their course west of the mountains no white man had ever been seen by the natives previously.

tablished, on the waters of the Lewis or Snake river, the first post ever formed by white men in the country drained by the waters of the Columbia; but in 1810 it was abandoned. In 1811, John Jacob Astor, of New York, of the Pacific Fur Company, established a fort and settlement, at the mouth of the Columbia, which was called ASTORIA. One portion of the company went by water around Cape Horn, the other, under Mr. Hunt, by land.

* During the war of 1812, this settlement was taken by the British. It was restored in October 1813, through the Agent of the United States, J. B. Prevost, Esq., agreeably to the first article of the Treaty of Ghent, but was not re-occupied by the Americans; and had it not been for the public spirit and admirable perseverance of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in their endeavors to christianize and ameliorate the condition of the natives of that territory, and the roving trappers, from the Missouri and Arkansas, we should have lost the occupancy of the country by American citizens altogether.

The Methodist Missionary establishment on the Wallamette, or Willamet, is the principal American settlement in the territory. In fact, independent of the Missionary establishments of the Methodist Episcopal Church, there are but few American settlers in Oregon of which we have any account.

In and around the Rocky Mountains, there are, generally, about 400 American trappers or hardy mountaineers, who have temporary places of rendezvous, but nothing that would bear the name of settlement, except it might be Fort Hall, near the head waters of Lewis's or Snakeriver, and on the route now travelled from the head waters of the Platte river to the settlements in Oregon.

In the excellent and very full report of Mr. Pendleton, heretofore noticed, we find a letter from the Rev. Thomas E. Baird, of New York, which gives the latest and fullest account of the American stations in that territory. He says:

"The Missionary stations are: 1, Astoria; 2, Multnomah, or Wallamette, situated on a river known by those names, which empties into the Columbia river about 94 miles above its mouth,

"This station is located in the centre of the finest district in Oregon. The soil is very fertile, the surface level enough for cultivation every where, and parts of it are described as resembling the Geneva flats.

"This district is said to contain a space as large as the State of New York. Many other portions of Oregon contain lands equally as good, but in no part of it is there so large a body of good land in one continuous district. In general, the territory is very hilly and broken, and the highlands sterile.

"The third station is on the Columbia river, 140 miles from its mouth. The river is navigable by

large vessels up to this place; above this it becomes rapid and rocky.

4. Puget's sound. Here is a fine harbor, which will one day render it an important position, in a commercial point of view. It is situated on the Pacific ocean, about one hundred and forty miles north of the point where the Columbia river disembogues.

"5. On the Wallamette, forty miles above its junction with the Columbia. There is a fall in the Wallamette at this point, supplying great water power; and small crafts can ascend to this point.

"6. A mission was contemplated, at our last advices, on the Umpqua river, which empties into the Pacific some two hundred miles south of the mouth of the Columbia.

"7. Clatsop, a new station, near the mouth of the Columbia. The Missionary of this place has furnished us with a sketch of a map, imperfect no doubt, but yet giving a general view of that part of the country which he has seen."

English.—Since the late war the English have pushed their settlements, through the agency of the Hudson Bay Company, with great perseverance. They are occupying the most important points, claiming the best soil, and monopolizing the whole trade and commerce of that vast country, and dotting its whole face over with forts. They have a line of forts and stations extending from the Rocky Mountains, on the northeast, to the mouth of the Columbia—the principal of which is Vancouver's, ninety miles from the Pacific, and at the head of navigation for vessels of heavy burden. They have a fort at the mouth of the Umpqua river, and another at the mouth of Frazer's river, as well as others scattered along the coast and in the interior, especially north of the Columbia river, as we have already shown.

The rapacity of the British nation has no bounds, and her appetite, sharpened by conquest, would swallow up the territory, trade and commerce of the world. Their fort at Colville, high up the Columbia, is, perhaps, next in importance to that of Vancouver. Colville, or the country around it, is represented as a delightful portion of the territory. The seasons do not alternate in wet and dry, as nearer the coast and further south, but rain is frequent the year round. The soil is fine, and vegetation of the most excellent growth. The country south of the Columbia, and that watered by Frazer's river in particular, is exclusively occupied by British subjects. This state of things cannot last long peaceably, and the sooner our Government looks after its own interests, and the protection of its citizens, the better will it be for all concerned.

*Emigrants' Route.**

*The distance in a straight line from St. Louis to the mouth of the Columbia, is about 1800 miles—the travelled route is over 3000 miles.

The emigrant can go by water up the Missouri, to the very verge of savage society. At this point a caravan is prepared to travel by land, and the journey may be said to really commence. The route, after leaving the main route of the Missouri, at perhaps Council Bluffs, continues directly west to the Platte river, and on the north side of the Platte, passing the Black Hills and a place called Red Butte, (Parker,) where the Platte forks, or forms a junction with a branch called Sweet Water, which extends through the great chain or highest ridge to the west verge of the mountain pass to the very sources of the Colorado of California, and Lewis or Snake river of Oregon. There are said to be four passes through the mountains, but this is the best and most southern, and but a little north of 42 deg., the southern boundary of the Oregon Territory. The route then continues down Lewis or Snake river, on its south bank. The traveller sometimes, evidently, leaving the stream greatly on his right and travelling the north portion of the great California sand desert.

Mr. Parker, the Missionary, who travelled through this pass in 1835, says:

"On the 10th of August, they were in the passage of the Rocky Mountains, at an opening recently explored, in latitude 42½ degrees north, about 3 or 4 degrees south of the place where Lewis and Clarke crossed and re-crossed with great difficulty above thirty years before, under the direction of Government. The passage through these mountains is in a valley, so gradual in ascent and descent, that I should not have known that we were passing them, had it not been that as we advanced, the atmosphere gradually became colder, and at length we found the perpetual snows upon our right hand and upon our left, elevated many thousand feet above us—in some places ten thousand. The highest parts of these mountains are found, by measurement to be eighteen thousand feet above the level of the sea. This valley was not discovered until some years since. Mr. Hunt and his party, more than twenty years ago, went near it, but did not find it, though in search of some favorable passage. It varies in width from five to twenty miles; and following its course, the distance through the mountains is about eighty miles, or four day's journey. Though there are some elevations and depressions in this valley, yet, comparatively speaking, it is level. There would be no difficulty in the way of constructing a railroad from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean; and, probably, the time may not be far distant when trips will be made across the continent, as they have been made to Niagara falls, to see nature's wonders."

We find also an account, taken from the Missouri Herald, of a journey of General Ashley.

"The recent expedition of General Ashley to the country west of the Rocky Mountains has been

productive of information on subjects of no small interest to the people of the Union. It has proved that overland expeditions, in large bodies, may be made to that remote region, without the necessity of transporting provisions for man or beast. Gen. Ashley left St. Louis in March last, and returned in September. His return caravan consisted of upwards of one hundred horses and mules, and more than half that number of men. He went to the station of the party which he had left beyond the mountains, when he came in a year ago, and thence descended a river, believed to be the Buenaventura, about one hundred and fifty miles, to the Great Lake. His return march to St. Louis occupied about seventy days, each mule and horse carrying nearly two hundred pounds of beaver fur; the animals keeping their strength and flesh on grass which they found, and without losing any time on this long journey. The men also found an abundance of food; they say there was no day in which they could not have subsisted a thousand men, and often ten thousand. Buffalo furnished the principal food—water of the best quality was met with every day. The whole route lay through a level and open country, better for carriages than any turnpike road in the United States. Wagons and carriages could go with ease as far as General Ashley went, crossing the Rocky Mountains at the sources of the north fork of the Platte, and descending the valley of the Buenaventura towards the Pacific ocean. The lake which terminated the expedition westward, is a most remarkable body of water, and heretofore unknown, unless from vague accounts. It is estimated to be one hundred miles long and sixty or eighty wide. It was coasted last spring by a party of Gen. Ashley's men in canoes, who were occupied four and twenty days in making its circuit. They did not exactly ascertain its outlet, but passed a place where they suppose that it must have been. The water of this lake is much saltier than that of the sea. Some of the salt obtained from this water by boiling has been brought in by General Ashley.—He has also brought in some specimens of rock salt, found in strata several feet thick at the surface of the ground, with streams of water running through it in numerous little channels. The people in the mountains plentifully supply themselves with salt at this spot, and carry it home in bags.

"In the whole expedition Gen. Ashley did not lose a man, nor had any one of those died whom he left behind last year; many of whom have been out four or five years, and are too bappy in the freedom of these wild regions to think of returning to the comparative thralldom of civilized life. It would seem that no attempt has been made to ascertain the precise latitude and longitude of the point at which General Ashley crossed the mountains. It is to be hoped that this will not be neglected on the next expedition. From all that we can learn, the elevation is exceedingly small where the passage of the mountains was effected—so small as hardly to effect the rate of going of the caravan, and forming, at most, an angle of three degrees, being two degrees less than the steepest ascent on the Cumberland road."

The evidences of the easy pass of this mountain are abundant. Though gradual, the elevation must be very great, as Mr. Parker experienced, in the valley of the pass, snow and ice in August. The mountain tops every where are covered with eternal snows, even in sight of valleys of almost perpetual spring.

A missionary expedition went out in 1836, from the account of which we make an extract:

"The communication, from which the following extracts are taken, was written soon after Mr. Spaulding and his associates, including Mrs. S. Doctor and Mrs. Whitman and W. H. Gray, left the frontiers of the State of Missouri about the first of May, 1836, in company with a company of gentlemen engaged in the fur trade. Their route, as did Mr. Parker's of the preceding year, generally lay near the Missouri river, till they reached the Platte; thence along that river to its fork, and thence along the north fork, by the Black Hills, to near its source; thence to Green river, one of the head branches of the western Colorado; thence to the waters of Bear river, which empties itself into the great Salt lake; and thence to the head waters of Louis's river, the southern branch of the Columbia, on which, or on the streams which run into it, they pursued their course to fort Wallawalla, one of the principal trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, about three hundred miles from the Pacific ocean.

"The mission family took with them a small wagon, which, however, they left behind them when they had accomplished about half their journey.—They preferred to travel or horse-back, and nearly the whole distance of more than two thousand miles was passed in that manner. As the country is not inhabited, except by wandering bands of Indians, when the supplies of provisions with which he started shall be exhausted, the traveller must depend for the means of subsistence on the game which may be taken as he proceeds. Of course he must confine himself almost entirely to animal food, while he will find that to be scarce and of a bad quality. Mrs. Spaulding and Mrs. Whitman are believed to be the first white women that have crossed the Rocky Mountains. But, though subjected to many hardships and privations, and some perils, the health of the whole party was decidedly improved by the journey."

We make a few other extracts from the Journal of Mr. Spaulding:

"The geological structure of the earth, except a tract of beautiful granite, through which we travelled for a few days near the Black Hills, and one or two specimens on Snake river, is one and the same, viz: basaltic. It would seem that the entire Rocky Mountains, extending even to the Pacific Ocean, have been thrown up from the bowels of the earth by internal fires. The country of the Columbia river, especially, is a beautiful specimen. The bluffs on either side rise to the height of one hundred to one thousand two hundred feet, in benches of perfect flutes, closely piled, all perpendicular, with the exception of two small piles which I observed in passing from Wallawalla to this place; one horizontal, the other oblique. For one whole day, while passing the Blue Mountains, two days from Wallawalla, we were upon cut stones, or stone broken by some natural agency, and resembling very much continued heaps of such broken stone as is prepared for covering roads in the States. This day's travel injured the feet of our animals more than the whole journey besides. In fact, we found but little difficulty till we reached these mountains. Most of our animals made the whole journey without being shod. We drove a wagon to Snake Fort, and could have driven it through, but for the fatigue of our animals. We expect to get it at some future time. "The whole face of the country, from Fort William, at the foot of the Black Hills, till within six

or seven day's travel of Wallawalla, is covered with the mountain sedge—a species of wormwood, with a fibrous stalk of the size of a man's wrist, and from three to four feet high, having a dead appearance.—No creature, I believe, eats this bitter herb, unless compelled by hunger. This sedge is some obstruction to the wagon, though but little to the pack-horses.

"Three days before we reached Fort Hall, we passed what seems to me one of the greatest curiosities in the world—a natural soda-fountain of unknown extent, having several openings. One of them is about fifteen feet in diameter, with no discovered bottom. About twelve feet below the surface are two large globes, on either side of this opening, from which the effervescence seems to rise.—However, a stone cast in, after a few minutes, throws the whole fountain into a violent agitation. Another of the openings, about four inches in diameter, is through an elevated rock, from which the water spouts at intervals of about forty seconds. The water is, in all its properties, equal to any artificial fountain, and is constantly foaming and sparkling. Those who visit this fountain drink large quantities of the water, with good effect to health. Perhaps in the days when a railroad connects the waters of the Columbia with those of the Missouri, this fountain may be a source of great gain to the company that shall accomplish such a noble work, if they are beforehand in securing it. For I am sure, if visitors can come from the far East to see the Niagara falls, they would not value a few days more to visit the West and see the great soda-fountain of the Rocky Mountains.

"Within a few days' ride from Salmon Falls, we passed three grand shoots of water, where small rivers rushed from the perpendicular bluff, and fell from a height of about five hundred feet from the surface of the earth, and three hundred from the surface of the river, from the lofty banks of which they fall.

"Four days before reaching Snake Fort, we passed three hot springs; I also saw several afterward. The water was at boiling heat. Fish were boiled sufficiently in them in twenty minutes.

"The last thing I will mention under this head is Grand Round—so called from its appearance. It is a beautiful, rich, circular plain, probably twenty miles in diameter, surrounded on all sides by mountains covered with beautiful pine and spruce. A considerable river passes through the middle, skirted with timber. This is in the Chingoo country, and is a favorable place for a mission."

As your committee have alluded in other parts of this report to the great California desert, they give the account of it, as crossed by Mr. Spaulding, on his route from Fort Hall to Wallawalla. There is no doubt that this account of the Rev. Mr. Spaulding, who travelled over the North part of this desert with his wife, and Mr. and Mrs. Whitman, has led to the numerous false accounts of the Oregon Territory in general. The reason why this Southern route is travelled, is because it is an almost continuous level; so much so, that a wagon or carriage might be driven from this city to Wallawalla, without much inconvenience, so far as hills or mountains would obstruct the passage. We present this ac-

count of the route, that those who may traverse it may prepare accordingly:*

"With regard to the country through which we passed, nothing, probably, could have set me right but actual observation, so different is the reality from what I had previously imagined. The fact that the vast interior of North America is a barren desert, is not, so far as I am aware, very extensively known in the United States. On the twenty-second of June we entered the Rocky Mountains, and came out of them on the first of September. Till we reached the forks of the Platte, we found some timber and considerable fertile soil on the water-courses, though both diminished to that point.—From that place, excepting a little spot at Fort William, Fort Hall, Snake Fort, Grand Round, Walla Walla, till we come within a hundred miles of this fort (Vancouver) the whole country is a barren desert, with only here and there a little patch of willows and grass, planted, it would seem, by the hands of a kind Providence, just often enough for stops at noon and night, reminding one of the great Sabara of Africa. In the morning we would mount our horses and ride hour after hour through plains of burning sand, or over mountains of rocks, till about midday; and when ourselves and animals had become thirsty, and hungry, and tired, we would come suddenly upon a cool spring, or stream of water, with a few acres of excellent grass for our horses, (excepting the route from Fort William to Rendezvous, where we suffered much,) and a little cluster of willows for fuel. So we would travel in afternoon till we came upon a similarly favored spot, about the hour when we wished to encamp for the night.

"A few days we were compelled to travel all day, some twenty or thirty miles, to find water and grass. The region of the Snake or Lewis river, especially, is the most barren of our whole route. We camped but a few times on the river, and always found a limited supply of grass and willow. Except these few spots, we could not discover a green thing upon its borders: from Fort Hall, where we struck it, to Snake Fort, where we left it, there is nothing but a vast plain of burning sand, with here and there a mountain of burnt rocks.

"Our route lay, generally, some miles from the river, where we found food and water as above mentioned. The river passes through a channel of cut rocks, from one hundred to five hundred feet deep, with frequent rapids and four or five falls. It is not navigable on account of rapidity. So far from be-

*Mr. Parker, who crossed the mountains at the same southern pass (or near it,) but whose route lay the other side of the Snake river some distance, met with none of this desert of consequence. He speaks of meeting with a vast variety of native fruits and berries, rich soil, prairie and lofty timber.—While near the head waters of the Snake or Lewis river, Mr. P. mentions receiving a quart of strawberries from two little Indian girls, and from an Indian service berries, "which are pleasantly sweet and somewhat resemble whortleberries."

"The native fruits and berries in use among the Indians are what they call the shallum, the solme, the cramberry, (a berry like the black haw,) the scarlet berry, of the plant called sacawmim, a purple berry like the huckleberry."—*Lewis & Clarke's Expedition.*

Every new expedition will search out new paths and conveniences, until a journey to the Columbia will be considered, in a few years, an undertaking of no great magnitude, except as to time and distance.

ing a country of game, except the buffalo country it is a country of comparatively no game. Since leaving Fort Hall, we have travelled days, and I do not know but I can safely say weeks, without seeing a living creature except a few crows in the air and herds of black crickets upon the ground. We saw but two bears in the whole route. However, I learn that in the mountains, deer, antelope, elk and bear can be found to some extent, even in the most destitute parts of the country. The rivers abound in fish. The Columbia and its branches teem with salmon three or four months in the year, during which time two or three hundred barrels are salted at Fort Vancouver. A little care during the salmon season, and all the settlers of the Columbia may supply themselves with salt salmon for the year.—The salmon find their way into the mountains up the several tributaries of the Columbia. We found them plenty at Salmon Falls, ten days below Fort Hall, perhaps a thousand miles from the ocean.—They continue to beat their way up the rivers and small streams until their strength is exhausted, and they float lifeless upon the shore. Not one of the countless herds that enter the mouth of the Columbia every season ever return. They are mostly dead by the first of October. The Columbia also abounds in sturgeon and seal."

Mr. Hunt, in crossing the Rocky Mountains, pretty much in the same latitude as Mr. Spaulding, who seemed to have seen little else than a sandy desert, thus, on arriving at the source of the Columbia, describes the country in that region:

"The aspect of this river and its vicinity was cheering to the way worn and hungry travellers. Its banks were green, and there were grassy valleys running from it in various directions into the heart of the rugged mountains, with herds of buffalo quietly grazing. The hunters sallied forth with keen alacrity, and soon returned laden with provisions.

"In this part of the mountains Mr. Hunt met with three different kinds of gooseberries. The common purple, on a low and very thorny bush, a yellow kind, of an excellent flavor, growing on a stalk free from thorns; and a deep purple, of the size and taste of our winter grape, with a thorny stalk. There were also three kinds of currants, one very large and well tasted, of a purple color, and growing on a bush eight or nine feet high. Another of a yellow color, and of the size and taste of the large red currant; the bush four or five feet high; and the third a beautiful scarlet, resembling the strawberry in sweetness, though rather insipid, and growing on a low bush.

"On the 17th, they continued down the course of the river, making fifteen miles to the south-west. The river abounded with geese and ducks, and there were signs of its being inhabited by beaver and otters: indeed they were now approaching regions where these animals, the great objects of the fur trade, are said to abound.—They encamped for the night opposite the end of a mountain in the west, which was probably the last chain of the Rocky mountains. On the following morning they abandoned the main course of Spanish river, and taking a north-west direction for eight miles, came upon one of its little tributaries, issuing out of the bosom of the

mountains, and running through green meadows yielding pasture to herds of buffalo. As these were probably the last of that animal they would meet with, they encamped on the grassy banks of the river, determining to spend several days in hunting, so as to be able to jerk sufficient meat to supply them until they should reach the waters of the Columbia, where they trusted to find fish enough for their support."

"*Animals.*—We have already seen that the domestic animals, carried into the territory by the whites, thrive remarkably well; and, requiring no provision for the winter, are supported at very inconsiderable expense. The only native animals which have been domesticated by the Indians are the horse and dog. The *middle region* is the one in which horses are raised in the greatest numbers, and of the highest excellence. Lewis describes them as being an excellent race, lofty, elegantly formed, active and durable, like fine English coursers, and resembling, in fleetness and bottom, as well as in form and color, the best blooded horses of Virginia. Horses are also said to be found wild in many parts of the country.

"Among the wild animals are the brown, white, and black bear, several varieties of deer, elk, wolf, tiger cat, foxes, antelope, sheep, beaver, common otter, sea otter, mink, seal, every species of squirrel, panther, hare, rabbit, polecat, &c.

"The sheep," say Lewis and Clarke, "is found in many places, but mostly in the timbered parts of the Rocky mountains. We have only seen the skins of these animals, which the natives dress with the wool, and the blankets which they manufacture from the wool. The animal, from this evidence, appears to be of the size of our common sheep, of a white color; the wool is fine on many parts of the body, but in length not equal to that of our domestic sheep."

"The beaver of Oregon is large and fat, and its flesh is considered very palatable food.

"Lewis and Clarke found the following birds: the grouse, or prairie hen, the cock

of the plains, four kinds of pheasants, buzzard, robbin, bat, crow, hawk, blackbird, owl, turtle dove, magpie, woodpecker, lark, snipe, and the calamut eagle.

"The aquatic birds are the heron, fishing hawk, kingfisher, gull, cormorant, loon, three kinds of brant, duckinmallard, canvass back, red-headed fishing duck, black and white duck, little brown duck, black duck, two species of divers, and blue-winged teal, geese, and swans. The canvass back of the Columbia is pronounced to be as fine as that of the Susquehanna.

"The fish are the whale, the propoise, skate, flounder, salmon, red char, two species of salmon trout, mountain, or speckled trout, bottlenose, anchovy, and sturgeon."

—*Mr. Pendleton's report.*

CONCLUSION.

Your committee have confined themselves exclusively to a history of Oregon, and the country through which emigrants pass by land to reach it. Our right to the country is not disputed by Americans—the only discussions seem to be as to the time and mode of throwing around the scattered population of that country the protecting arm of our national laws. Your committee think it should be done at once—delay has already endangered the peace of the country. A foreign power has already sent its subjects to occupy the soil and monopolize its trade and commerce. The old adage of "give an inch and take an ell," is fully exemplified in the conduct of the British Government in all parts of the habitable earth. The treaty of 1818, granting them a reciprocal commerce in the Oregon territory, has been met by an occupancy and claim to the whole country, and *all* its profitable business. With one foot upon the banks of the Ganges, and the other upon those of Oregon, bestriding China and the Polynesia, she might soon begin to ask, "are there any more worlds to conquer!"

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